CONTENT PLANNING

Language ability in young children is related to:

- academic outcomes, especially reading

- behavior, especially self-regulation

- relationships, especially with peers

School success is grounded in language ability.

The context of poverty affects language learning.

- less support for child talk
- fewer models of rich vocabulary
- less opportunity for literacy development

Even Start National Evaluation findings:

Even Start early childhood services overall were rated "good" but more emphasis needs to be placed on the quality of language-reasoning experiences, instructional activities, and staff qualifications and skills.

Even Start
Family Literacy Program

Multiple research studies show:

Many preschool programs serving poor children—including Even Start programs—have inadequate language environments.
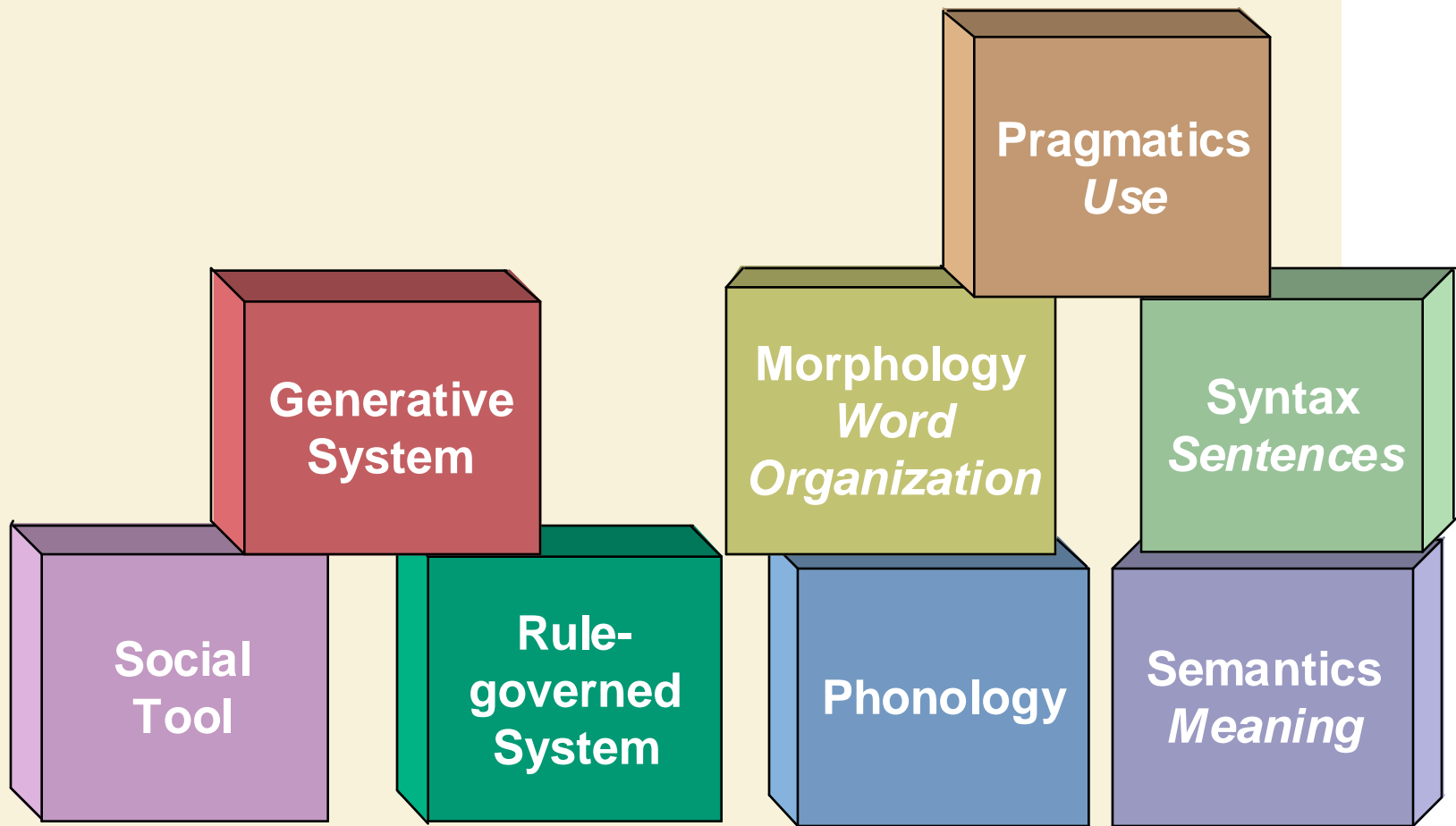
What are children learning when they learn language?

- Communication—process of exchange

- Language—socially shared code/conventions
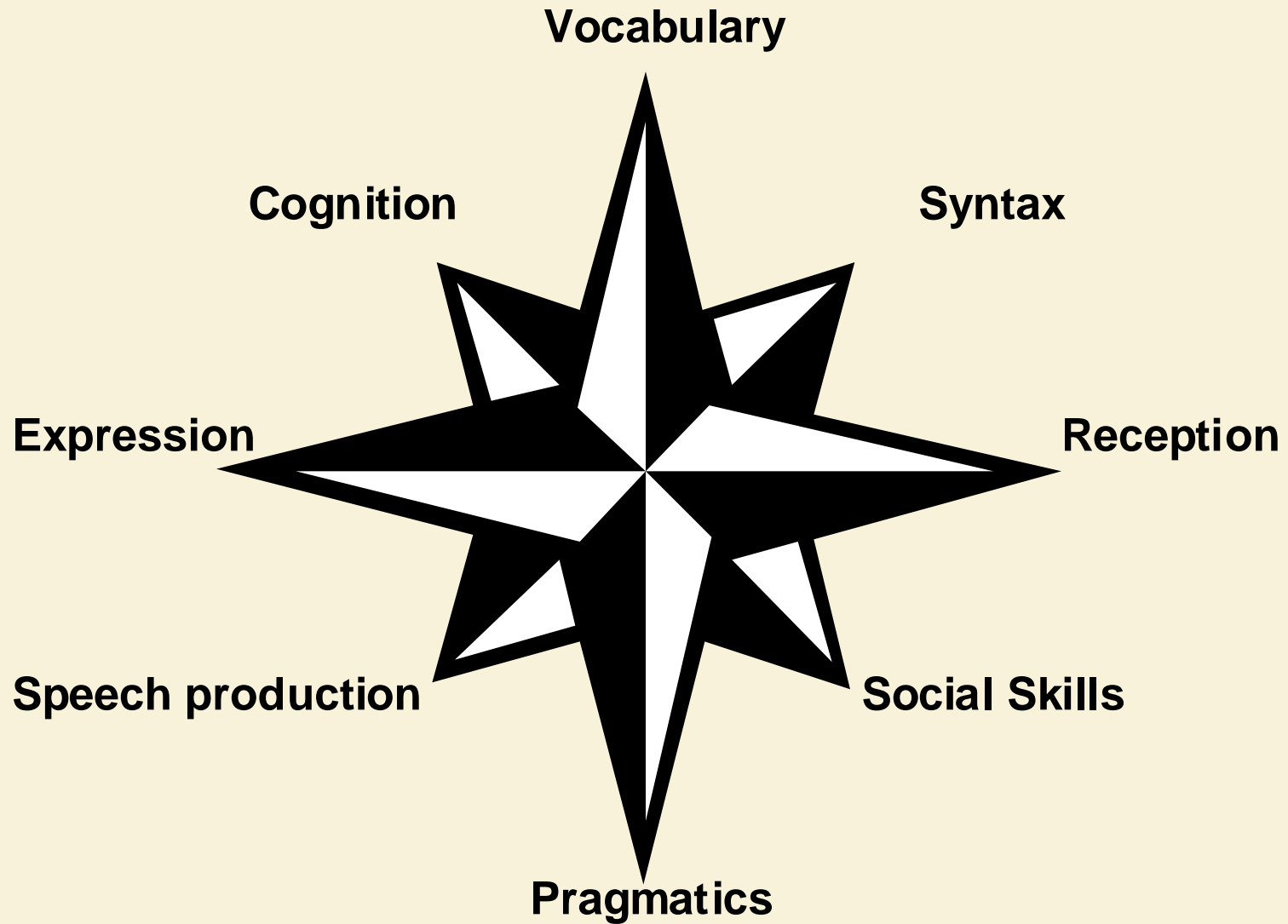
- Speech—oral language

Parts of Language System

Pragmatics
Use

Generative System

Morphology
Word Organization

Syntax
Sentences

Social Tool

Rule-governed System

Phonology

Semantics
Meaning

Language is Complex

Vocabulary

Cognition

Syntax

Expression

Reception

Speech production

Social Skills

Pragmatics

How oral language relates to literacy

Concepts ——————→ Foundational

Sounds ——————→ Phonological awareness

Words and parts ——→ Reading words, glossing
of words   meaning, vocabulary

Sentences ——————→ Reading sentences,
                                       glossing meaning

Narratives ——————→ Reading text, stories

Vocabulary

- Children learn vocabulary from language directed to them.

- Vocabulary reflects and "boot straps" cognitive skills.

- Vocabulary knowledge is the primary language skill for literacy.

Building New Vocabulary

- Words for specific things

- Words for actions

- Words that describe, specify, and elaborate

- Common words and "rare" words

Every Classroom Has Opportunities For:

Routines for Social Communication

Specific Vocabulary Learning

Everyday World Knowledge

Developing Core Cognitive Concepts

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Preschool environments should:

- create opportunities for communication

- include time for child talk

- include feedback from teacher

- provide language models

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Challenge for Even Start programs:

Most children need intense language intervention.

Even Start National Evaluation Finding: Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test

- Pretest: 4th percentile

- Posttest: 6th percentile

Even Start
Family Literacy Program

Intense interventions depend on:

- language curriculum
- development sequence
- procedures/strategies

Language curriculum is a road map for individual planning.

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Responsive Interaction (RI)

- Observing/listening/responding to children

- Engaging children in extended interactions

- Modeling language

Observe, Listen, Respond

1. Watch and listen for communication
2. Join in child's activity
3. Respond when child communicates
4. Respond meaningfully
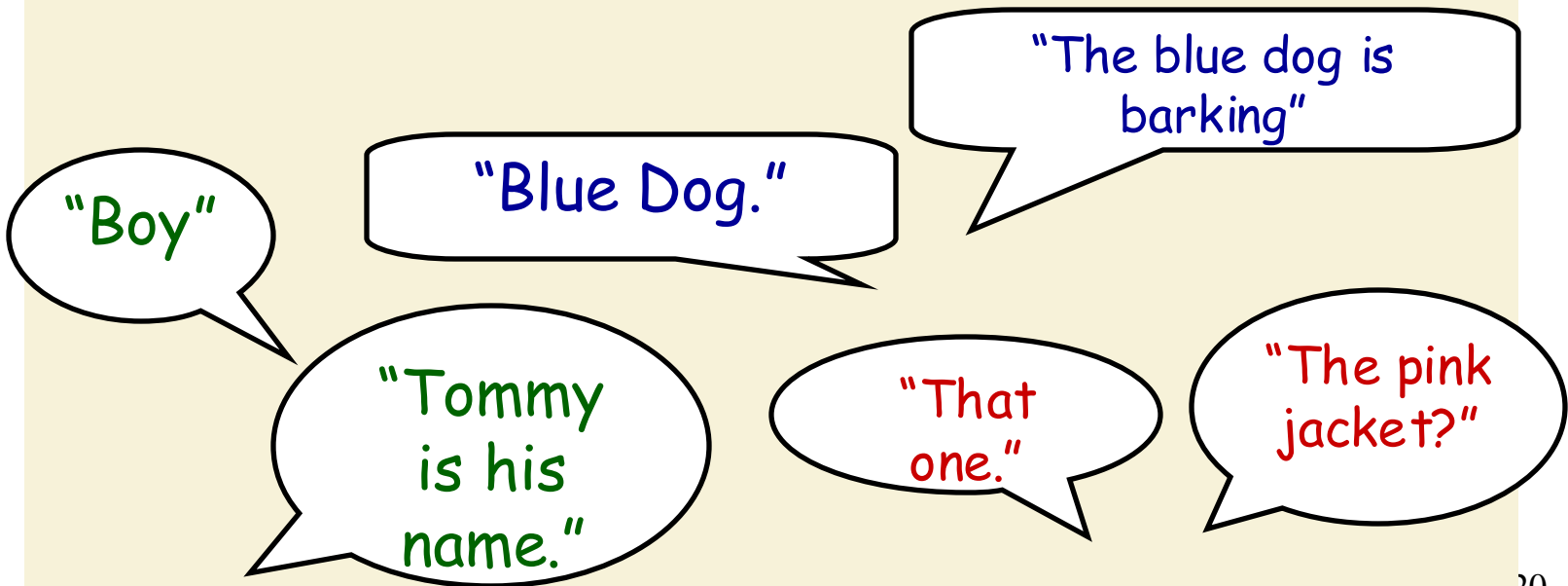
Extended Interactions

1. Keep turns balanced

2. Stay close to the child's topic

3. Match pace and style

4. Keep the conversation going

5. Ask "real" questions

6. Model language at developmental level.
   – Sentences that are longer than child's.
   – Specific label names.

7. Expand what child says

"The blue dog is barking"

"Blue Dog."

"Boy"

"Tommy is his name."

"That one."

"The pink jacket?"

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RI in the classroom requires:

- Knowledge of each child's communication level

- Classroom management that permits one-to-one conversations

- One-to-one, small group, large group strategies

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RI One-to-one

- **Plan language to be modeled/content to be taught.**

- **Follow child's interests and topic.**

- **Focus fully on the child.**

- **Teach in response to child communication.**

RI in groups

- **Allow turns for each child.**

- **Seek group and individual responses. Include large motor responses.**

- **Bridge one child's response to another.**

- **Keep interactions positive. Praise participation.**

- **Respond to the meaning each child communicates.**

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Everyday Language Techniques

- Provide many opportunities for language practice.

- Model sounds, words, structures, functions.

- Describe ongoing actions.

- Use open-ended questions.

- Use focused contrasts at child's level.

- Give feedback for child responses to questions.

Everyday Language Techniques, cont.

- Expand child's utterances.

- Recast child's utterances.

- Redirect; prompt initiations to peers.

- Script play activities.

Summary

- Use language development sequence as a guide

- Plan curricular content to emphasize language

- Observe, listen, respond to individual children

- Extend interactions

- Model elaborated language

Links to Other Even Start Components

Parenting Education:

- Teach the importance of
  a) "listen and respond"
  b) modeling rich, diverse language

- Anchor developmental information in **their** child.

Parent-Child Interaction:

- Help parents model language and expand child's communications.

- Support warm, positive interactions.

Adult Education:

- Build adult's vocabulary and background knowledge and encourage use in conversation with children.